

The course web page is <http://d2l.arizona.edu/>

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Sociology 526

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Research Methods for Social Network Analysis

Preliminary Information for those considering the course



“They say you are not you except in terms of relation to other people. If there weren’t any other people there wouldn’t be any you because what you do, which is what you are, only has meaning in relation to other people”
—Robert Penn Warren, *All the King’s Men*
(quoted in Knoke & Kuklinski, p. 7)

“But the essence of man is not an abstraction inherent in each individual. The real nature of man is the totality of social relations....”
—Karl Marx

Brief Description

Whereas much sociology is focused on the analysis of *variables* (such as education and income) abstracted from observable relations among individuals and institutions, social network analysis is the study of structures of social relations. This seminar treats qualitative and quantitative methods for social network research, emphasizing a “how-to” approach to analyzing existing datasets or those collected by seminar participants in their own research. Many of the readings are geared to user-friendly packages of computer programs available to those formally enrolled in the course.



Prerequisites

There are no formal prerequisites other than graduate standing. As Degenne and Forsé (1999) write (p. 12), “*in some studies methodology goes straight to the Appendix, but not in network analysis. Most network analysts put methods at the heart of the analysis.*” Of course I do not assume that you know about semigroup algebras, eigenvectors, or geodesic distances. My job is to get you comfortable with such concepts, by making them as concrete and research-relevant as possible. I am confident I can do this, but the “prerequisite” is motivation on your part to be interested in the practicalities of network analysis and its possible relevance to your research interests. This is a methods course with an attitude (see, e.g., the quotations above). It will help greatly if you have read widely in the social sciences, have conducted your own research or thought about doing so, and have some basic computer and internet skills (e.g., knowing how to maneuver around the internet, how to unzip a file, basic comfort in using Windows).

Soc 526 and Soc 527

Sociology 526 (this course) and Sociology 527 (*Social Networks*) are often offered in alternative years. Students may, if they choose to do so, take both courses for credit, in either order. Soc 527 concerns the logic and methods of social network analysis, with emphasis on theoretical underpinnings and applications to sociological research.

Reading List

You can [click here](#) to see the reading list from the last time the course was given. The reading list contains general info about the course and will give you an idea of the topics covered.

Contact me

I would welcome the opportunity to talk or write to people considering taking this course, whether you are in Sociology or another field, especially if we don't already know one another. You can reach me at

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*Citation: Degenne, Alain, & Michel Forsé, *Introducing Social Networks* (London: Sage, [1994] 1999).